



MICHIGAN ADOPTION DAY

Giving thanks for families

Tuesday, November 20, 2007

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Michigan Adoption Day to be held Nov. 20 *5th annual event celebrates adoptive families and children*

LANSING, MI, November 7, 2007 – Many Michiganders will have a special reason to celebrate this Thanksgiving season, as they welcome new members into their families on Michigan's fifth annual Adoption Day.

More than 30 Michigan counties will hold Adoption Day events on or about November 20, the date designated by the Michigan Supreme Court as "Michigan Adoption Day." The event, which is poised to be the nation's largest Adoption Day event for the fifth year in a row, is co-sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), and the Family Services division of the State Court Administrative Office.

Local events include finalizing adoptions and parties for adoptive families. Some counties will hold informational open houses with speakers and information about the adoption process.

Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor and DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said Michigan Adoption Day is aimed at encouraging potential adoptive and foster parents.

Taylor noted that, while adoption finalization hearings are usually private, many participating courts will open their adoption hearings to the public. "Michigan Adoption Day gives the public a window into the adoption process," Taylor said. "This is a celebration of adoption, but it's also very much about educating the public as to the challenges and great rewards of being an adoptive or foster parent."

Ahmed said: "I think a lot of people who have considered adopting or fostering a child would be willing to open their hearts and homes but hesitate because they aren't familiar with the process. We hope Michigan Adoption Day helps demystify adoption."

While DHS and state courts strive to reunite children with their birth parents, doing so is not always in the child's best interest. Courts may terminate parental rights in cases of child abuse and neglect. There are about 6,200 children in Michigan whose birth parents' rights have been terminated; of those children, about 4,300 have adoption as a goal. Many children

who are waiting for a family are older, members of minorities, have siblings, or have special needs as the result of physical, mental, or emotional impairments.

In fiscal year 2007, about 2,500 children were placed into adoptive homes out of the foster care system.

Anyone interested in adopting a child may contact MARE at (800) 589-6273 or visit the web site at <http://www.mare.org>. For more information about adoption, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs. For more information about Michigan Adoption Day events, visit the Michigan Courts web site at <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Press/MichiganAdoptionDayIndex.htm>.

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